

ents when they aprochen and asenten, they hepen & encrenen the servage which they han joynd to himself; and in this manere they ben caitifs fro hir propre libertee. The whiche thinges, nathelesse, the lokinge of the devyne purviaunce seeth, that alle thinges biholdeth and seeth fro eterne, & ordeineth hem everich in hir merites as they ben predestinat: & it is seyed in Greke, that Alle thinges he seeth and alle thinges he hereth.

Metre II.

Puro clarum lumine Phebum.

HOMER WITH THE hony mouth, that is to seyn, Homer with the swete ditees, singeth, that the sonne is cleer by pure light; natheles yit ne may it nat, by the infirme light of his bemes, breken or peren the inwarde entrailes of the erthe, or elles of the see. So ne seeth nat God, maker of the grete world: to him, that loketh alle thinges from an heigh, ne withstondeth nat no thinges by hevinesse of erthe; ne the night ne withstondeth nat to him by the blake cloudes. Thilke God seeth, in oo strok of thought, alle thinges that ben, or weren, or sholle comen; & thilke God, for he loketh & seeth alle thinges alone, thou mayst seyn that he is the verray sonne.

Prose III.

Cum ego, en, inquam.

THANNE SEYDE I, NOW AM I confounded by a more hard doute than I was. What doute is that? quod she. for certes, I conjecte now by whiche thinges thou art troubled.

Lesemeth, quod I, to repugnen & to contrarien greetly, that God knoweth biforn alle thinges, and that ther is any freedom of libertee. for yif so be that God loketh alle thinges biforn, ne God ne may nat ben desseived in no manere, than mot it nedes been, that alle thinges bityden the whiche that the purviaunce of God hath seyn biforn to comen. for which, yif that God knoweth biforn nat only the werkes of men, but also hir conseiles and hir willes, thanne ne shal ther be no libertee of arbitre; ne, certes, ther ne may be noon other dede, ne no wil, but thilke which that the divyne purviaunce, that may nat ben desseived, hath feled biforn. for yif that they mighten wrythen away in othere manere than they ben purveyed, than sholde ther be no stedefast prescience of thing

to comen, but rather an uncertein opinioun, the whiche thing to trowen of God, I deme thilke same resoun, as who seyth, I ne a-resoun, by which that sommen wenen that they mowen assoilen and unknitten that knotte of this questioun. for, certes, they seyn that thing nis nat to comen for that that is to comen, but rather the contrarye, and that is this: that, for that the thing is to comen, therefore ne may it nat ben hidere this necessitee slydeth ayen into the contrarye partye: ne it ne bihoveth nat, nedes, that thinges bityden that ben purveyed, but it bihoveth, nedes, that thinges that ben to comen ben yporveyed: but as it were ytravailed, as who seyth, that thilke answer procedeth right as thogh men travaileden, or weren bisy to enqueren, the whiche thing is cause of the whiche thing: as, whether the prescience is cause of the necessitee of thinges to comen, or elles that the necessitee of thinges to comen is cause of the purviaunce. But I ne enforce me nat now to shewen it, that the bitydinge of thinges ywist biforn is necessarie, how so or in what manere that the ordre of causes hath itself; althogh that it ne some nat that the prescience bringe in necessitee of bitydinge to thinges to comen. for certes, yif that any wight sitteth, it bihoveth by necessitee that the opinioun be sooth of him that conjecteth that he sitteth; and ayenward also is it of the contrarye: yif the opinioun be sooth of any wight for that he sitteth, it bihoveth by necessitee that he sitte. Channe is heer necessitee in that oon and in that other: for in that oon is necessitee of sittinge, and, certes, in that other is necessitee of sooth. But therfore ne sitteth nat a wight, for that the opinioun of the sittinge is sooth; but the opinioun is rather sooth, for that a wight sitteth biforn. And thus, althogh that the cause of the sooth cometh of that other syde (as who seyth, that although the cause of sooth cometh of the sittinge, and nat of the trewe opinioun), algates yit is ther comune necessitee in that oon and in that other. Thus sheweth it, that I may make semblable skiles of the purviaunce of God & of thinges to comen. for althogh that, for that thinges ben to comen, therefore ben they purveyed, nat, certes, for that they ben purveyed, therefore ne bityde they nat. Yit natheles, bihoveth it by necessitee, that either the thinges to comen ben yporveyed of God, or elles that the thinges that ben purveyed of God bityden. And this thing only suffiseth ynough to destroyen the freedom of oure arbitre, that is

to seyn, of oure free wil. But now, certes, sheweth it wel, how fer fro the sothe and how upsoodoun is this thing that we seyn, that the bitydinge of temporel thinges is cause of the eterne prescience. But for to wenen that God purvyeth the thinges to comen for they ben to comen, what othere thing is it but for to wene that thilke thinges that bitidden whylom ben causes of thilke sovereign purviaunce that is in God? And herto I adde yit this thing: that, right as whan that I wot that a thing is, it bihoveth by necessitee that thilke selve thing be; and eek, whan I have knowe that any thing shal bityden, so byhoveth it by necessitee that thilke thing bityde: so foloweth it thanne, that the bitydinge of the thing ywist biforn ne may nat ben eschued. And at the laste, yif that any wight wene a thing to ben othere weyes thanne it is, it is nat only unscience, but it is deceivable opinioun ful diverse and fer fro the sothe of science. Wherefore, yif any thing be so to comen, that the bitydinge of hit ne be nat certain ne necessarie, who may weten biforn that thilke thing is to comen? for right as science ne may nat ben medled with falsnesse (as who seyth, that yif I wot a thing, it ne may nat be false that I ne wot it), right so thilke thing that is conceived by science ne may nat ben non othere weyes than as it is conceived. for that is the cause why that science wanteth lesing (as who seyth, why that witinge ne receiveth nat lesing of that it wot); for it bihoveth, by necessitee, that every thing be right as science comprehendeth it to be. What shal I thanne seyn? In whiche manere knoweth God biforn the thinges to comen, yif they ne be nat certain? for yif that he deme that they ben to comen uneschewably, & so may be that it is possible that they ne shollen nat comen, God is deceived. But nat only to trowen that God is deceived, but for to speke it with mouth, it is a felonous sinne. But yif that God wot that, right so as thinges ben to comen, so shullen they comen... so that he wite egaly, as who seyth, indifferently, that thinges mowen ben doon or elles nat ydoon... what is thilke prescience that ne comprehendeth no certain thing ne stable? Or elles what difference is ther bitwixe the prescience & thilke jape/worthy divyninge of Tiresie the divynour, that seyde: Al that I seye, quod he, either it shal be, or elles it shal nat be? Or elles how mochel is worth the devyne prescience more than the opinioun of mankinde, yif so be that it demeth the thinges uncertein, as men doon: of the whiche domes of men the bitydinge nis nat certain? But yif so be that non uncertein thing ne may ben in him that is right certain welle of alle thinges,

thanne is the bitydinge certain of thilke thinges whiche he hath wist biforn ferme ly to comen. for which it foloweth, that the freedom of the conseiles & of the werkes of mankinde nis non, sin that the thocht of God, that seeth alle thinges without error of falsnesse, bindeth & constraineth hem to a bitydinge by necessitee. And yif this thing be ones ygraunted and received, that is to seyn, that ther nis no free wille, than sheweth it wel, how greet destruccioun and how grete damages ther folowen of thinges of mankinde. for in ydel ben ther thanne purposed and bihight medes to gode folk, and peynes to badde folk, sin that no moevinge of free corage voluntarie ne hath nat deserved hem, that is to seyn, neither mede ne peyne; and it sholde seme thanne, that thilke thing is alderworst, which that is now demed for aldermost just and most rightful, that is to seyn, that shrewes ben puniished, or elles that gode folk ben ygerdoned: the whiche folk, sin that hir propre wil ne sent hem nat to that oon ne to that other, that is to seyn, neither to gode ne to harm, but constraineth hem certain necessitee of thinges to comen: thanne ne shollen ther nevere ben, ne nevere weren, vyce ne vertu, but it sholde rather ben confusoun of alle desertes medled withouten discrecioun. And yit ther foloweth another inconvenient, of the whiche ther ne may ben thocht no more felonous ne more wikke; and that is this: that, so as the ordre of thinges is yled and comth of the purviaunce of God, ne that nothing nis leveful to the conseiles of mankinde (as who seyth, that men han no power to doon nothing, ne wilne nothing), than foloweth it, that oure vyces ben referred to the maker of alle good (as who seyth, than foloweth it, that God oughte han the blame of oure vyces, sin he constraineth us by necessitee to doon vyces). Channe is ther no resoun to hopen in God, ne for to preyen to God; for what sholde any wight hopen to God, or why sholde he preyen to God, sin that the ordinaunce of destinee, which that ne may nat ben inclyned, knitteth and streineth alle thinges that men may desiren? Thanne sholde ther be doon away thilke only allyaunce bitwixen God and men, that is to seyn, to hopen & to preyen. But by the prys of rightwisesse & of verray mekenesse we deserven the gerdoun of the divyne grace, which that is inestimable, that is to seyn, that it is so greet, that it ne may nat ben ful ypreysed. And this is only the manere, that is to seyn, hope & preyer, for which it semeth that men mowen speke with God, & by resoun of supplicacioun be conjoined to thilke cleernesse, that nis nat aproched no rather or that men beseken it & impetren it. And